Never had there been a beginning, at ogetically. "Thank your stars you're not a tortise, and take another doze." known ourselves Ruth and I had known and mary school, and sauntered arm in arm to the Foundation. Together we had sailed within the retreat of the harbor and then over the rolling bar into the rock-bound bay. until we dared venture on the mighty surges of the Atlantic, and had tested and proved our blood by circumnavigating the

And when I left for the university there had been no coquetry, no doubt. "God bring you back to me, Ralph," said Ruth, as she stood within arm's reach of me on the point of the pier. "I'm not leaving you, dear; I'm simply preparing our home," said I, as I leaned over the rail from the deck. Each day of the four years, varying as it did in storm, sunshine, heat and cold, was constant in this single joy-a letter from Ruth to me and a letter from me to Ruth.

And when I returned with my degree, and we sailed again over the rolling bar, beyond the dark, shadowy waters of the bay, and out on the broad ocean until our island home was but a smudge like a sea scud on the horizon, every wave which embraced us and lifted us up seemed to say: "It was yesterday that we greated you, and to-morrow we shall greet you again."

All through that summer we sailed over the trackless waters whose paths were well defined to us. We were both expert, but Ruth was the better sailor, as she was my superior in all respects. I was apt to be indifferent, unmindful, enwrapped with dreams, but there was an instinct of Ruth's whose every impulse was timely and complete. Often when I was far away within the Temple of Fame, at work at that niche which was surely to be mine. her quick hand on the sheet had saved us from capsizing. Perhaps I was the more careless since I felt that wherever Ruth

was there also were peace and security. How we talked over the future, for there never had been a time when that future hadn't been ours. I was to go to the city How faithfully I would work and how learned I would become! And then, when I had established myself in my profession, we were to be married and buy a cottage, with surrounding grounds, in the suburban university town whose shades I loved so well, and Ruth did, too, because I did, and ever after we were to be happy, as we ever had been-together! We each had a little money, small

enough in the aggregate, yet we believed that it would keep us until my success came. My success! What brilliant-hued tikeness of it we drew! I was to be a great advocate, of course, a dread to all designing men, but a tower of strength especially to the weak and unfortunate. Resides—though this "besides" was generally my own—there was my divine gift, my poesy. What golden showers might it not conjure for us. I had indeed won quite a name for occasional verse, for which I had faculty, but this was nothing to what the t Utopian "some day" should bring when the great poem of which I was always dreaming was published and the bay leaves were bound about my brows by

admiring throngs. "But never neglect the real for the ideal,"
Ruth would say gravely. "We can get
slong without the pinnacle, but not withbut the foundation. Future fancy is pleasanter than present duty; but I prefer our
cottage to your temple with its niche, don't Sweet little Ruth, so prudent, so wise! She should have her cottage surely, I

vowed: but as we sat on its veranda at eventide we would see the sunlight gilding the minarets of that temple, also.

The autumn came and brought the day of my departure. Again Ruth stood on the point of the pier; again I leaned over the rail; again we talked as if never before we had talked, until the captain shouted

the gangway was drawn and the hawsers loosed. Then, as the paddles churned, Ruth stretched on tip of toe. "Here, Ralph, dear," she cried, and she reached Rather puzzled-for this was not like

ere last we

Maud Bureek. Miss His Cilm

guests !

or, is in the

overn

Ruth-I went into the cabin and read it. It was but a line: "Ralph-I ask you to be suspicious of How surprising, how incomprehensible! might almost as well be suspicious of Ruth! Yet that "almost" was a long word, believe me. But Frank Dunbar, my friend! My roommate at the university, and now again to be at the law school! How could I be suspicious of one who was constant in kindness to me, whom I respected for his character and honored for his ability? Surely, something I had said in my blundering way must have misled Ruth; yet, what had I said, except praiseworthy things? For the first time I almost doubted Ruth's judgment. But, again, that "almost" was a long word, believe me.

Frank Dunbar! how spotless, how noble he appeared, as I considered him. His nickname revealed his character, as nicknames always do. "Perfection Dunbar! Never had he varied a hairbreadth from be suspicious of one who was constant

Never had he varied a hairbreadth from the line of duty. Never had he taken part in frolics—rarely in pleasures. Work was his preference-work that told. He had led his class, but this had not sufficed. His languages and the theory of music. Yet he was never a prig. He sympathized with the weaknesses of others, though he had none himself. No one could laugh more heartily over scrapes, nor picture revelry more enticingly. But when others, after such a conversation, rushed headiong and heedless into trouble, Frank returned tranquilly to his books. He never preached, never sought to inculcate his principles. That is what we all liked in him. Often he would say to me: "Go ahead, old boy. What's the difference? Enjoy

your youth!" Yet he was a year younger

He was such a prudent fellow, too, was Frank. He lived like the rest of us, but he

discriminated between comfort and extravagance. So, while we were generally in debt, and sometimes in distress, he always had plenty of money. I used to be so sorry for him. He couldn't lend, for he had promised his father, and he would grieve lest his inability should be misconstrued. Frank was ambitious, truly. No young squire, emulous of his spurs, could have been more so. Yet he was distrustful of his powers. "I can't do what you fellows do," he would say, humbly. "I must stick to my treadmill." And, while we all realized his mental as well as moral superiority, we liked him the beater for veiling it. We respected his honest scruples, and never sought to tempt him from his course. How heart-single, too, was Frank. Though not a handsome man, for he had small eyes, red hair, and a short, squat figure, he was fascinating in manner and speech. He attracted and retained interest. There were many sides to his nature, and that side which would be most consonant and agreeable to a companion he intuitively revealed. We all concurred in the opinion that he would prove irresistible to any woman if he should ever care to exert himself. But he had no time for romance, so he said. And yet what a confidant he was; never prying. never curious; but learning one's secret thoughts as if in spite of himself. Why, he knew all about Ruth. I had talked of her for hours at a time, and he had been just as interested, just as helpful, when I finished as when I began. I had read her letters to him, and he would say: "Good night, Ruth;" "Good morning, Ruth," to her little picture, which was enshrined in a blue capinet on the mantel of our study,

just as I did. Ruth knew all about him, too. Why, my letters and our talks had been full of him for years. Was that not natural, since he was my hero, as she was my darling? Besides, they had met and were such good friends. Ruth had often attended events at the university, and during this past summer Frank had visited me at our island home, and had sailed with us over the bar and through the bay, and out on the broad surges. Of all our happy days, those when Frank had been with us were the happiest. How versatile, how brilliant, how charming he had been! For once he had tried all his gifts to their utmost, out of loyalty to And yet Ruth had written this note of

Could she be jealous? laughed at the thoughts Ruth was Ruth. Besides, if such an impossible emotion had entered her dear little heart, perfect love would have cast it forth immediately. No, there was no explanation. It was simply a misapprehension, a mistake. I The door opened, and my principal credkissed the little note and laid it away in | itor entered, accompanied by a marshal. my pocket case, resolved never to think of | "I want, you, my man," said that functionit again. Should I doubt friendship might | ary. not my faith be so shattered that I would even come to doubt love also? I reached the city station at eventide, and there was Frank awaiting me, quiet, self-contained as ever, but, oh, so glad to

"My dear boy! What happens to have | cent." you with me again!" he exclaimed. "And how brave and bonny we've grown, to be sure. Right foot forward, and on to success, hey? Well, well! Oh, fortunate was a cunning catch between you. But youth!" And tears shone in Frank's eyes, you're vastly mistaken if you think you , too, was moved. Who wouldn't be, indeed, by such manifest affection? "Forme of the fellows are around at Blang's," said Frank. "A nice quiet ling. In an instant all recent doubts had place, most respectable. We might join fled; I only remembered our old intimacy. them for awhile and renew old times." Agreed. We went, and spent such a olly evening of song and reminiscences amusedly. and good cheer. But the next morning | "No green there," he ejaculated. Then he

A NOTE OF WARNING when I awoke with such a dizzy head there was Frank, cool and alert, pegging "I must do it, you know," he said, apol-

The next day I started briskly at my studies, determined to master the law. loved each other. Together we had played on the sands when we were so little that each one was a care to the other. Together we had toddled, hand in hand, to the pridestation of the sands when we were so little that side by side, weeks of contentment for me, for I felt that I was doing my duty and pleasing Ruth. The little note didn't disturb me. I never referred to it in my daily letters. My present course seemed its best answer. After a while, though, came nterruptions. Our merry friends of the first evening began to drop into our rooms. I believed that most of them were not prudent companions, and I told Frank so. "You're right," he replied. "Still they're such dear, good fellows. A little reckless, perhaps, but it's mere froth, and beneath is worthy substance. Because we are fixed we musn't be Pharisaical, Ralph. We owe a duty to our old comrades, don't

> I did think, and with shame. How open and manly Frank was in every way. So, evenings, there was apt to be a jovial gathering in our rooms. No one would be so jolly, so full of suggestions of sport as Frank, until suddenly he would clutch his hair with mock gravity and shout, "Now clear out, you fellows, every one of you. Ralph can go with you. He takes to the law like a duck to water. But I am the plowman who must plod his weary way." And off we'd go, at heart quite sorry for Frank. One day he said to me, noticing that I was yawning over my books as I had yawned much of late:

> "How's the epich, Ralph?"
> "There's no need of ridiculing it," I replied rather sharply. "You know very well what I hope some day to do—'The Adventures of Alvarado' in heroic verse. Doubtless it will never see light, but respect its prenatal condition.

> "My dear boy, don't be so touchy. You wrong me. You know what faith I have in your genius. I want you to take up this subject in all seriousness. Let me do the boning; you can achieve success in a "Or fall in the ditch."

"Or wake some morning like Byron to find yourself famous." "But the lectures, the cramming, the moot courts. What would Ruth think should I neglect these obligations?" "What would she think should you re-ceive your due and be hailed as America's laureate before you are twenty-five? 'Tis woman truly who clings to the young knight and entreats him to stay from the wars, but, when he returns giorious, she is the first to crown him. Besides law is so natural to you. You know that your can readily make up the work of a quarter in a fortnight. But the profession will never be even an incident to you, be-lieve me. No man will grub if he can

Oh, rare and beauteous vision that rose Oh, rare and beauteous vision that rose before me! The little cottage with Ruth in the quiet university town; the delightful toil in the study, with Ruth by my side as an inspiration; the society of the cultured; the praise of the worthy!

"Surprise her," suggested Frank.

Aye, I would. I would refine the gold of my intellect. I tossed Justinian into a corner behind the lounge, and there he lay until the dust was as thick as his age might warrant. Thereafter I dreamed and dreamed—until I was aroused.

might warrant. Thereafter I dreamed and dreamed—until I was aroused.

How careful Frank was of my moods, for, of course, I became moody. He taught me that a poet must be a child of impulse. not a man of habit; that when the spirit moved him he must drive his thoughts until they tottered from weariness; but, except when that mysterious spell settled, he must suffer them to recruit in apparent idleness. He led me to believe, oh, so easily, that I, poor I, indeed! was as one set apart and chosen, not answerable to the calls of duty nor accountable for foibles. He would instance Horace, and Dryden, and Chatterton, and Savage, and Shelley, and Byron. Byron especially he considered my prototype; and I was dolt enough to think so, too. "Here, you fellows!" he would cry, "take Ralph out of this rush for a hurrah, Pegasus's wings are drooping." And the lively, generous-hearted lads would oil the downward grade with sincere adulation. sincere adulation.

I did not work feverishly, unnaturally, turning night into day, and burning the candle at both ends. I became nervous irritable, overwrought, but each manifestation was greeted as proof of the divine afflatus that filled me. I grew careless of my appearance. My collar was rolled back, my hair disheveled—oh, what an egregious

As for money, I disdained it as dross When I had it I flung it broadcast, but the lack of it never restrained me. I had credit which would have been inexplicable to a rational man, but I accepted it as tribute to my genius. No jackdaw ever believed in his sorrowed plumage or strutted as arrogantly as I did. I pose a before the distorted lens of conceit and thought its reflection real. In one thing alone I was constant. I wrote to Ruth the same contented, cheery daily letters as of yore. Oh, how hard it was! Sentence by sentence I dragged through a task that had formerly been such a delight. Yet I succeeded—at least I thought I did.

The spring came. After infinite copyings and recognings "Alvarede". ings and recopyings "Alvarado" was fin-

"Don't prune," warned Frank, as I hesi-tated over passages of my wildest moments. "Luxuriance is the poet's attrib-And so I bound the mighty pile of manuscript together and sent it confidently to a leading publisher. Confidently, indeed, for my assurance had achieved a brief apotheosis. Then followed an intolerable waiting, bringing doubt, dread and misory. The fover had person and left misery. The fever had passed and left my mind, too weak for any exertion, a prey his class, but this had not sufficed. His to worry. My gay companions were gay exuberant energy had mastered the modexaminations they were throwing up earthworks of desperate diligence. Yet when I tried to dig also I found I was absolutely impotent. Where now was my intuitive knowledge of the law, where that judgment so accordant with equity? Alas! I comprehended that I had risked everything on a single cast, and I dared not think what this everything might include. Then it was that I noticed a singular

change in Frank. "Just look at my duns," said I to him one day, anxiously, holding up a mass of bills and letters. "It seems impossible that could have been so reckless. Why, I must have been crazy.' "You certainly have had an agreeable faculty of ignoring such little matters."

"But what shall I do?" "Do? You have money, haven't you?" "Gone, all gone." "Phew! You must have been going it, haven't you, in spite of precept and example. Oh, well, your precious 'Alvarado' will settle everything, I guess," and Frank

It wasn't a pleasant laugh, nor did it sound like Frank, but I was so troubled that I scarce appreciated it then. "Do you really think so?" I questioned,

"I mean what I say. It will settle every-thing-you included. But doubtless Ruth will pay.' I leaped to my feet in a rage. Frank confronted me for an instant with cold, sarcastic eyes; then he shrugged his shoulders disdainfully and left the room. I sank in a chair, trembling and gasping. What did it all mean? Was I held by a horrible dream? Such words, such looks from Frank, my friend, my Pylades. my Mentor! Could it be that he had changed, that I had changed, that the future was a void, that the past was a sham, and that nothing was real except the present debt, the approaching examination, the impending disgrace? I opened my pocket case. I read the note of warning from Ruth, so long unheeded. Again I couldn't comprehend it. but I did thoroughly realize that whatever she said should have been obeyed with a true lover's fealty. For hours I sat pressing my throbbing

head within my hands, trying to shut out the disordered visions which flashed before me. Then came a knock at the door, I opened it, and a messenger entered, laid a large, yellow parcel on the table, and withdrew. Did I recognize the wrapper? Oh, didn't I! A hundred years weighted me as I glanced at it. The very paper! The very string which I had knotted with such excited fingers! Oh, dear, oh, dear! too well did I know what had happened. There was a note which I read in a flash, "Regrets-evident merit - voluminous-expense to warrant publication!" I threw "Alvarado" in the corner behind the lounge. where its fall scattered the dust from Justinian. Then I mouned. The room faded away. Again I felt the clinging air of the island home. Again I saw the harbor, the rolling bar, the rock-bound bay, the broad surges of the Atlantic; but, alas! sombre and melancholy were their sweeps, a requiem, not a welcome for I was alone.

"But you can't arrest for debt," I stam-"How about fraud and fake representation and pretense? This man claims that New York Press.

a young millionaire, when you haven't a

There were heavy steps on the stairs.

Where, oh, where was Ruth?

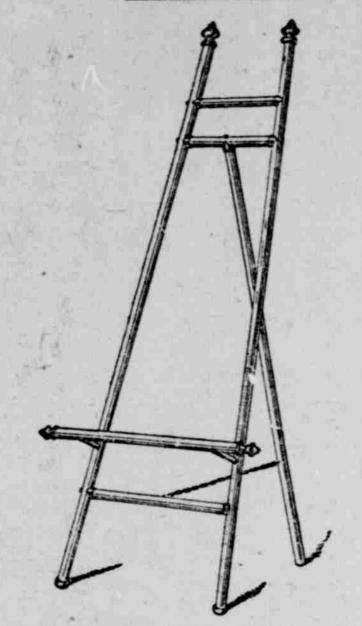
"I never said such a word." "No, but your roommate did, many a time," interrupted my creditor, "Oh, it can do me without smarting for it.' "Come along," said the officer. At this juncture Frank strolled in, whist-

The Last Straw. Brooklyn Life. must go into insolvency. "Oh, Frank!" I cried. "Help me!" He looked at the officer and winked Mr. Newwed-So I did; but good heavens, | Mention this paper.

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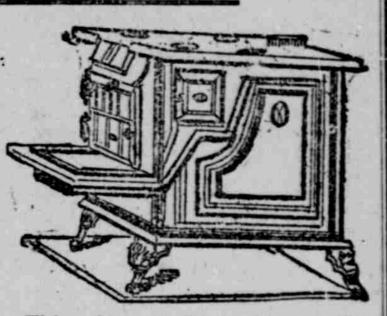
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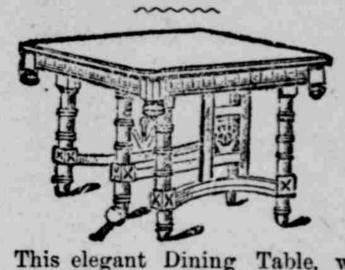


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turned toward me. "You will have to excuse me," he said, suavely, "if I decline to walk the floor instead of our confiding friend here. Besides, I have an urgent engagement. I'm off to the island home to

Then, while the blood roared within my ears and clouded my eyes, a wonderful thing occurred. Again the door opened. A little form glided to my side and threw her arms about me, and Ruth's voice exclaimed, oh! so blithely:

"That won't be necessary, Mr. Dunbar. You can find me here for the future with Then she went to the men and whispered few words, and they sneaked away shame-

"I told you she would pay, you cur," sneered Frank. "Hush, dear," she interposed. "Why shouldn't I? Whatever is mine becomes his on our wedding day."

Then, at length, I comprehended the note of warning, for as Frank departed from my sight and from my life his glance, as it rested on Ruth, changed from one of fierce malignity to one of unutterable longing and despair.

What more shall I say? The sequel is the old unreal ending, but for us most real: "They were ever after happy:" We were married that day, for Ruth scarcely dared trust me from her sight. In a few years the little cottage in the quiet university town became an actuality. I was never a "dread" nor a "tower of strength," I am sure, but I honestly earned our daily bread. And more, during one summer vacation picked up "Alvarado," and I slashed it well, remorsely hewing away all that luxuriance, which is a true poet's attribute, and I sent it, much shrunken, to a publisher. One evening, as I sat on the veranda, Ruth brought me a letter. It contained a bewildering offer for the poem. "My dear," said I, as I showed it to her, perhaps we may yet see the sunlight gilding the minarets of that temple." "You see," she exclaimed, "all things "Because in you I have everything," I re-

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

A Lyceum Echo. Do you like our Northern actors?" asked a fair Bostonian. "I prefer Sothern!" answered a New Orleans belle.

The Retort Courteous.

New York Recorder. "Why, Mr. Rounder, how very bald you are getting! If I were you I'd wear a wig." "So I see, ma'am. But-

"I will never speak to you again!" Not Left in Doubt.

Good News. Neighbor-I hear your father intends to put up a new house. Who is his builder? Boy-What's that? "Why, the-er-one who bosses the job?" "Oh! why, ma, of course,"

A Slander. New York Weekly. Mrs. Muggs-That horrid Mrs. Frills told Mrs. Nexdoor that I was a regular old cat. What do you think of that? Mr. Muggs-I think she never saw you

in the same room with a mouse. His Inheritance.

Cholly-"This is my grandmother's portrait, and I am thought to have some of her His Adored-"Yes, I see a strong resemblance between her eyebrows and your

An Ideal Resort.

New York Weekly. Friend-So you escaped the heated term Mrs. Brickrow-Yes, indeed. We were at a delightful summer resort. Slept under the blankets every night and sat around and shivered every day.

"Why don't you put Dobbins on your foot-"Physical infirmity." "Why, he looks to be a strong, well-built, muscular fellow.' "Yes, but he's bald."

Not Cut Out for It.

A Nice Distinction.

Longshot-Take my advice, my boy, quit betting on the races. Fast horses will be your ruin if you keep on. Oddson-No, you are wrong. It isn't the fast horses that break me; it's those that aren't quite fast enough.

Where She Failed.

"She was a wonderfully bright and intelligent girl, always at the head of her class and the star scholar at graduation, In fact, she never failed in anything till she married." "And how did she fail then?" "She married a man to reform him."

Mr. Newwed-My dear, I am afraid I Mrs Newwed-But, George, last night you thought the prospects were bright for pull-

Marie, here are three more wedding invita-

A New Excuse.

Tramp-"Couldn't you give me a few Woman-"What will you do with it? Buy whisky, I suppose?"

Tramp—"No, ma'em. I'm collecting money for the Duke of Veragua."

Pleasant Politeness.

New York Weekly.

Fond Mother—And so you gave up your seat to a young lady in the street car. That was very polite. Did you have to stand up the whole way?

Little Boy—Oh, no; I didn't stand up at all. I climbed up in her lap. About All It's For.

Mr. Newrich-Land sakes, Mandy, what

you got so many knives an' forks at each Mrs. Newrich-I'm sure I don't know, but that's the way that new man fixed 'em. I s'pose likely it's jus' to show we've got Mitigating His Chief.

"What are you crying for, Bobby?" said Willie Cawker to a little playmate. "I've lost a big silver dollar that Uncle Frank gave me. Boo-hoo!"
"Pooh! I wouldn't worry about that There's only fifty-five cents' worth of silver in the coin anyhow."

Time to Retire Them. Good News.

Little Dick-Auntie says all those pretty things called bric-a-brac used to be in reg'lar use. I wonder w'en they went out of fashion and got stuck way up on mantel-Little Dot-I guess it was w'en folks found that some of their childrens was goin' to be boys.

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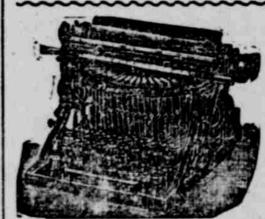
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